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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 ANKARA 002137

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

Thursday, APRIL 14, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Syria Welcomes Sezer With Great Ovations - Vatan
Neighbors Sezer, Assad Hand-in-Hand - Hurriyet
Sezer Given a Hero's Welcome in Syria - Star
Sezer: Assad Pledged Full Withdrawal From Lebanon by Month's
End - Milliyet
Talabani: An Independent Kurdistan Cannot Survive - Aksam
Armenian Priest Kalayjiyan Insults Ataturk - Vatan
Bulgaria, Romania to Join EU in 2007 - Sabah
Bush a Country Music Fan - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Damascus Gives Sezer a Warm Welcome - Cumhuriyet
Sezer Advises Damascus: Don't Defy the World - Zaman
Damascus' Love for Sezer - Radikal
Syrian Press Praises Sezer's 'Courage' Despite US Pressure -
Yeni Safak
European Parliament Holds a Minute of Silence for Armenian
'Genocide' - Radikal
Iran to Withdraw 2,000 Troops From Lebanon - Zaman
Armenian Church Representative Calls Ataturk a 'Butcher' -
Cumhuriyet
Kaim May Become a New Fallujah - Yeni Safak
Zoellick's Convoy Attacked in Baghdad - Radikal
Wealthy Nations Offer Sudan a Record-High \$4.5 Billion Aid -
Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

President Sezer Given a Warm Welcome on Official Visit to
Syria: In meetings with his Syrian counterpart President
Bashar al-Asad in Damascus on Wednesday, Turkish President
Ahmet Necdet Sezer stressed the need for reforms in the
region, papers report. Sezer expressed pleasure over
Syria's decision to withdraw from Lebanon in line with UN
Security Council resolutions. All Turkish papers give
extensive coverage to the Sezer call on Damascus yesterday,
during which the Turkish President was given a warm welcome.
Syria and Turkey expressed a genuine desire to push
bilateral relations forward and expressed similar identical
viewpoints on recent developments in the Middle East,
reports comment. President Assad said in a statement after
three meetings with Sezer that their talks were
'comprehensive, positive and fruitful,' and that the visit
by Sezer demonstrated the depth and strength of ties between
the two countries. Assad pointed to the agreement between
Syria and Turkey regarding the importance of consolidating
Iraq's sovereignty and unity. 'The political process in
Iraq should guarantee the widest possible participation of
the Iraqi people without foreign interference,' Assad said
of Iraq. On the situation in the 'occupied' Arab countries,
Assad said Syria agreed to solve the issue in accordance
with UN Security Council resolutions. Assad urged a full
Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands occupied in 1967, adding
that Palestinians should be allowed to build their state
with Jerusalem as its capital. Assad praised Turkey's
efforts and constructive role to achieve a just and
comprehensive peace in the region. Assad said he and Sezer
expressed a strong interest in Lebanon's security and unity.
Sezer agreed that they shared the same point of view on
developing cooperation in all fields, saying his talks with
President Assad touched on economic, political, trade and
cultural topics, the situation in Iraq, and the Palestinian
cause. Sezer said the two countries shared the same views
regarding Iraq's integrity and unity and international
efforts to rebuild the country. The Turkish president also
welcomed Syria's pullout from Lebanon. At a dinner hosted
by Assad in honor of Sezer and his delegation, the Syrian
president recalled that Damascus has condemned terrorism and
reiterated his readiness to struggle it. Assad also voiced
appreciation for Turkey's supportive position of the 'just
causes' of Syria. Sezer said positive developments in

Turkish-Syrian relations in recent years led to increased cooperation, which will promote prosperity for both peoples. Sezer reiterated his call for continued efforts to preserve Lebanon's stability and unity. Sezer called on the international community to back the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Sezer also said that restoration of Iraq's position in the international community as a sovereign and free country is a common goal for Syria and Turkey.

Erdogan Receives Molyviatis: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan discussed bilateral ties and Cyprus with visiting Greek Foreign Minister Petros Molyviatis in Ankara Wednesday, papers report. The two expressed a common will for resolution of the Cyprus problem and stressed the need to intensify dialogue between Ankara and Athens. Erdogan said that a solution in Cyprus should be found under the aegis of the UN. Molyviatis proceeded to Istanbul after wrapping up meetings in Ankara. Meanwhile, Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis is expected to visit Turkey in June.

MFA Denies Gul Backed Lifting of 'Casus Belli' Decision: The Turkish Foreign Ministry said Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul's remarks to the Greek daily "To Vima" on the territorial waters dispute between Athens and Ankara had been 'misinterpreted.' Spokesman Namik Tan denied that Gul has supported the lifting of a 1995 Turkish parliamentary decision of recognizing Greek attempts to extend territorial miles as a 'cause for war.' Turkey has no change of policy on the subject, Tan said. On the other hand, Turkish media reported yesterday and today that Turkish and Greek boats were involved in a confrontation near 'Kardak,' an uninhabited islet in the Aegean. The incident occurred as Greek and Turkish foreign ministers heralded a new era of cooperation during talks in Ankara, say papers. The Turkish side holds Greeks responsible for the mini-crisis, which was resolved just an hour before Molyviatis was received by Erdogan on Wednesday.

TGS on Turkey-Greece, Armenia, 'Polarization' in Turkey: Responding to questions from press at TGS headquarters in Ankara Wednesday, Second Chief of Staff General Ilker Basbug said Turkey will not change its policy of viewing Greek attempts to extend territorial waters in the Aegean to 12 miles as a 'cause for war.' Basbug said a decision adopted on the issue by the Turkish Parliament on June 8, 1995 is still in force. 'The basic objective of this policy is not to provoke, but to prevent, clashes between the two countries,' Basbug noted. Commenting on the desecration of the Turkish flag during celebrations of Kurds' 'Nevruz' festival in Mersin last month and the lynching attempt by nationalists against four leftist activists in Trabzon last weekend, Basbug said the Turkish military will not tolerate attacks on the flag. 'Such provocations will only harm Turkey,' Basbug said, and called on the nation to act within the scope of laws and common sense. Papers give extensive coverage to statements by President Sezer, Prime Minister Erdogan, and General Basbug warning the Turkish people not to respond to provocations. The incident in Mersin last month triggered an outpouring of flag-waving patriotism across Turkey. European Commission representative Hans-Joerg Kretschmer said he is following the events in Trabzon 'with great concern.' A senior EU diplomat in Ankara said that a successful lynching could have interrupted Turkey's EU entry talks.

Turkish Parliament Declaration on Armenian 'Genocide': The Turkish parliament issued on Wednesday a declaration against the Armenian genocide allegations. The declaration said it is for the benefit of Turkey and Armenia to reconcile, end prejudices and create a climate which would enable the two nations to share a common future based on tolerance, friendship and cooperation. It called for the formation of a joint commission of Turkish and Armenian historians which would have unfettered access to archives in both countries. Turkey and Armenia will only pass on prejudices, enmity and vindictive feelings to their children unless they end taboos through a joint initiative and prepare to settle old scores with their history, the declaration said. It called on other countries wanting peace and stability in the Caucasus to support the initiative. Turkey's General Staff (TGS) said military archives from the 1914-18 period would also be opened. Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said Turkey will formally ask the British parliament to reject the so-called Blue Book, published in 1916, which contains eyewitness accounts to conclude that Armenians were being systematically exterminated by the Ottoman Turks.

Oskanyan Lashes Out at Turkey: Armenian Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanyan said that Turkey is not only refusing to adopt a conciliatory approach regarding the 'genocide' issue, but is also trying to launch a counterattack. According to the Yerevan-based Mediamax agency report, Oskanyan recalled that Turkey has asked London to declare as 'groundless' The Blue Book, which is considered one of the main sources on which the Armenian claims are based.

Turkish leaders have recently said the book was wartime propaganda. Oskanyan also said that during membership negotiations with the EU, Turkey will be asked to recognize the Armenian genocide. Oskanyan said that if Turkey, with its big military potential and pro-Azeri position on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, does not recognize the 'genocide,' Armenia would not feel safe. "Hurriyet" says that Oskanyan has 'rudely' rejected calls by Turkish parliament to set up a commission to investigate the claims of 'genocide.'

President Moo-hyun Due in Turkey: South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun is due in Ankara late Thursday, on the first state visit by a Korean leader in 48 years. Moo-hyun said his visit will help boost Korean investments in Turkey.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Turkish President to Syria

"Blind and Deaf Hosting Each Other"

Cengiz Candar observed in the conservative-sensational DB Tercuman (4/13): "A Turkish minister was visiting Baghdad while Iraq was on the brink of war and the toppling of the cruel Saddam regime was at hand. The Turkish Foreign Minister was even defending such a mistake at the time. Currently we see a similar situation with President Sezer's visit to Damascus to see a leader whose tenure is about to come to an end. It is only a matter of days. The Turkish presidential visit was welcomed by the Syrian regime, with the prime minister saying Sezer had come to his second home. It is hard to comprehend the reasons for this kind of myopia and even blindness that Turkish leaders are suffering from. They somehow fail to understand that such blindness will only cause Turkey to lose significant ground in the international arena. 'National pride' and 'independence of decision' have absolutely nothing to do with this. On the contrary, presenting an image of support for an ailing dictatorial regime in the Middle East is fully incompatible with Turkish national pride. . It seems that Turkey and Syria do indeed have something in common: both of them insist on making major strategic mistakes and continue to misread international realities. . There could be a Turkish proverb for this kind of situation: 'the deaf and the blind enjoy hosting each other.'"

"Assad Should Make a Gesture for Turkey"

Hakan Celik wrote in the sensational-mass appeal Posta (4/13): "Sezer visited Damascus at a time when international sensitivity is at its height. Hosting the Turkish president is a very important event and demonstration of support for both the Syrian people and the Syrian regime. It seems that Syrians have already considered it to be a kiss of life. Damascus has received a friendly and supportive hand from Turkey in the midst of its current international dilemma. . The aftermath of this visit is very important. Any concrete result will contribute to peace in the Middle East. Assad should be able to use the unique opportunity that came with Turkey's friendly hand. He should take the necessary steps to comply with the international community's expectations of the Damascus regime."

EDELMAN